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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SITUATION IN THE SUDAN

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE
Office of Current Intelligence

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
30 December 1964

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Situation in the Sudan

1. The transitional government which emerged in the Sudan from the political eruption of late October and early November is still highly unstable. The cabinet is an uneasy coalition of representatives from the various political groupings, including four communists. It has been hamstrung by frictions and by the general unwillingness of its members to take controversial or unpopular decisions. The various party leaders are maneuvering to increase their popular strength before parliamentary elections now scheduled for this spring. The divergent interests of these leaders, and of the groups behind them, make the chances for evolution of a stable government extremely poor, even if elections can be conducted. There is thus a continuing possibility of a sudden breakdown of public security which could well endanger US lives and property.

2. The most disturbing feature of the political situation since the military regime was ousted has been the rapid increase in the influence of the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP). The SCP is now manipulating and exploiting the "Professional Front" --a grouping of leftist-influenced organizations of lawyers, doctors, etc.--to widen its power base for the elections. Still numerically weak, the Communists probably hope to run in the elections both party sympathizers and apolitical professional people whose parliamentary votes they could control. They are also reportedly making overtures to leaders of the National Unionist Party, whose strength is largely among urban workers, in hopes of forming a coalition.

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3. Meanwhile, leaders of the Ansar politico-religious brotherhood, the most influential of the non-Communist groups, are working through a "National Front of Political Parties," which they organized and control. They fear the expansion of Communist influence, and have threatened to call massive demonstrations to press their demand that the government reduce Communist representation in the cabinet. The Ansar command an extensive following, primarily in rural areas, and hope to win a major victory in the elections. Any Ansar move against the Communists before the elections, however, would meet strong opposition, could provoke new violence, and would probably play into Communist hands.

4. The army has accepted its subordination to the civilians with hardly a murmur. Along with the police, the army has been seriously weakened by purges and will probably be unable to play any positive political role in the near future. Many army personnel, however, are strongly anti-Communist, and their intervention could still be decisive in any open conflict among the political parties.

5. In foreign affairs, the new government has enthusiastically adopted radical Arab and African nationalist causes in place of the generally pro-Western policies of the former regime. Although the Communists in the government have certainly played a major role in making this shift, the non-Communist parties and the public as a whole seem equally anxious to get in step with the more strident African and Asian nationalists. This attitude is reflected in the Sudan's wholehearted support for the Congolese rebels.

6. A major and apparently insoluble problem confronting this regime, as it did the previous one, is the long-standing "southern question." The regime came into office pledging immediate measures towards alleviating the problems of the three southern negroid provinces, where separatists had been waging a terrorist campaign against the government for more than a year. Some conciliatory moves were made, but violent racial rioting in Khartoum in early December brought them to an

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abrupt halt. Official statements continue to deny the existence of any rebel activity in the South and to assert that fruitful discussions are taking place between Arab and Negro leaders. Other evidence makes it clear, however, that the breach between North and South is almost complete, and the government leaders are now openly declaring that the Sudan is and will remain a unitary state. Anti-Arab terrorist activity is almost certain to increase again in the South.

7. Parliamentary elections have been scheduled to take place in March or April. Recurrence of violence in Khartoum, however, as well as the inevitable difficulties involved in setting up the election machinery will make it difficult to hold the elections on schedule.

8. Tensions therefore seem likely to increase rather than diminish, and there is no sign of the emergence of effective authority to keep them in bounds. The danger of violence is particularly acute in the capital, where mob action has taken place frequently in the past two and a half months with little interference from the security forces. Anti-Western and anti-Christian sentiment is now strong. The danger to American lives and property is thus a continuing one.

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